

VZCZCXRO3114
PP RUEHBC RUEHDE RUEHIHL RUEHKUK
DE RUEHGB #3775/01 3361713
ZNY CCCCC ZZH
P 011713Z DEC 08
FM AMEMBASSY BAGHDAD
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 0642
INFO RUCNRAQ/IRAQ COLLECTIVE

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 BAGHDAD 003775

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 12/01/2018
TAGS: [PGOV](#) [KDEM](#) [PREL](#) [PINS](#) [IZ](#)
SUBJECT: SALAH AD DIN PROVINCIAL ELECTIONS PART II:
MINORITIES AND BA'ATHISTS

REF: A. BAGHDAD 3211
[B](#). BAGHDAD 1684
[C](#). BAGHDAD 3774

Classified By: PRT SALAH AD DIN TEAM LEADER RICK BELL FOR REASONS 1.4 (a) and (d).

[1](#). (U) This is a PRT Salah ad Din reporting cable.

SUMMARY

[2](#). (C) In addition to National Sunni Arab political entities, Shi'a and Kurdish parties, representing minority populations in Salah Ad Din (SaD) province, are preparing for provincial elections there (ref C). Former and current Ba'ath party networks in SaD are reportedly split as to whom to support, or indeed whether to support the electoral process at all. If key candidates (notably the Deputy Governor) are disqualified from running on De-Ba'athification grounds, the consequences for SaD province could be destabilizing. END SUMMARY.

MINORITIES

[3](#). (C) SaD is overwhelmingly Sunni Arab. The Shi'a presence is concentrated in the two southern-most districts, Balad and Dujayl (even there, the rural areas are largely Sunni) and in Tuz district. The Governorate Electoral Officer (GEO) described the Shi'a turnout during the recent voter registration drive as "apathetic" (ref B). Tuz is the most mixed district in the province; its population includes a substantial number of Turkmen Shi'a, some of whom have voted according to their ethnic identity, others according to their religious affiliation.

[4](#). (SBU) Reportedly, some Shi'a Arabs in Tuz are aligning with Kurds. The Kurds (almost all of them in Tuz) are expected to make a strong showing as in the past, thanks to their discipline and unity. However, due to the Sunni Arab boycott of the 2005 provincial elections, Tuz is currently over-represented in the Provincial Council (PC); that is expected to change, as no major boycott by Sunnis is anticipated for the upcoming elections.

THE BA'ATHIST FACTOR

[5](#). (C) The old Ba'ath Party networks are still a part of the social fabric in SaD, where much of the Party's senior leadership has its roots. Ba'athists are said to be split between those, including exiles in Syria, who recognize the Party made mistakes under Saddam and are willing to make corrections, and hardline followers of Izzet Ibrahim Al-Douri (the most senior Ba'ath leader who has never been caught), who refuse to acknowledge any errors. The PRT understands

that Ba'athists are sending money from Syria to support electoral campaigns.

¶6. (C) According to our sources, many residents of Ad-Dawr, the hometown of Izzet Ad-Douri, hope he will bring the Ba'ath Party back to power after Coalition Forces leave, and therefore have not encouraged local participation in the upcoming elections. Because of this passivity, the current mayor of Ad-Dawr, who has registered to run for PC on his own, may do well. Alternatively, Ad-Dawr may find itself without representation in the PC.

¶7. (C) Some Ba'ath Party candidates in SaD could be declared ineligible by the GOI's De-Ba'athification Committee. Several non-Ba'athist politicians are openly counting on the disqualification of rivals. Ahmed Abdullah, aka Abu Mazen, Governor Hamad Humood Shekti's Assistant for Security Affairs (who, along with the Governor, is running on Ayad Allawi's list), listed three current PC members who should not be allowed to run: Deputy Governor Abdullah Hussein Jebara, Qahtan Hamada Saleh (the Governor's Assistant for Technical Affairs), and PC member Suleiman Yusuf Ahmed. Another source claims Abu Mazen met with Ahmed Chalabi recently and offered him a bribe to prevent Ba'athists*particularly the Deputy Qhim a bribe to prevent Ba'athists*particularly the Deputy Governor*from running. (NOTE: The Deputy Governor reportedly has a letter from Chalabi exempting him from disqualification. Some have questioned the authenticity of the letter, but at least one seemingly-reliable source thinks it genuine. END NOTE).

COMMENT

BAGHDAD 00003775 002 OF 002

¶8. (C) An initial list of potentially disqualified candidates released by the GOI's De-Ba'athification Committee has included Deputy Governor Abdullah and the Qahtan Hamada Saleh, the Governor's Assistant for Technical Affairs. We believe that if former senior Ba'athists are declared ineligible, the consequences for SaD could be destabilizing, as some former Ba'athists in the province have proved to be effective administrators. END COMMENT.
CROCKER